

Concentric Circles

Goals/Uses:

- Create random partners or small groups
- Build personal and academic/professional connections
- Facilitate specific conversations
- Offer some movement

Logistics:

- Time: 5-15 minutes—depends on the number of rounds
- Space: an open space is needed

Directions:

- Have the group count off by 1s and 2s.
- Have all 1s stand in a circle, facing outward.
- Have all 2s find a 1 for a partner. They should stand facing them, forming a circle around the 1s.
- Assign a discussion topic and give partners a short amount of time to discuss.
- If needed, briefly discuss as a whole group.
- Next, shift one circle. For example, you might say, “Outside circle, move one person to your right.”
- Now, with new partners, assign the next discussion topic.
- Repeat for several rounds.

Suggestions:

- If there is an odd number of people, have two 1s join together and travel together for this activity. If space is tight, you can put the 2s in the inside circle so that the larger group is on the outside.
- Consider mixing social and academic questions.
 - Social: “What’s something fun you’re looking forward to about this weekend?”
 - Social/school: “What’s something you love about your class right now.”
 - Content (adults): “What is a way we can help boost students’ growth mindsets in math?”
 - Content (students): “How are things going with your research project right now. What’s something you’re going to work on next?”
 - Content (students): “Together, see if you can remember and describe how photosynthesis works.”